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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2008

In Today's Papers

ATC Conference in Washington

Hurriyet, Milliyet, and Yeni Safak cover the 27th meeting of the American-Turkish Council (ATC) held Monday in Washington. General Hilmi Akin Zorlu, the head of the military General Staff's (TGS) Planning Department, said during his address, "Some of Turkey's allies provide support for the PKK." However, Zorlu warned, "Those backing the PKK may also be hit by terror one day." Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul and the Prime Ministry Undersecretary Efkani Ala also joined the meeting. Mainstream Hurriyet's webpage reports Lt. General John Sattler, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, urged Turkey "to seek a comprehensive settlement" to the PKK question, including the need for new steps for the Kurdish population. He said there was no need to declare a general amnesty, but added that Turkey could offer an option to PKK militants who want to leave the terrorist organization and who have not been involved in terror attacks. "The U.S. encourages the Turkish and Iraqi governments to work together in combating the PKK," Sattler emphasized.

Toptan and Erdogan Disagree on Article 301 Changes

All papers report a bill for amending article 301 of the penal code was sent to the parliament's justice committee for discussions yesterday. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes under the headline, "Article 301 Divides the AKP," that "the notorious provision has already caused a rift among the leaders of the ruling party." This proposed bill requires permission from the president before charges can be filed against an individual who violates the law. In a news conference Monday, Parliamentary Spokesman Toptan noted that this arrangement could create serious troubles for the president, and that the Justice Ministry should authorize such lawsuits. Prime Minister Erdogan, who spoke to journalists during an official visit to Qatar, disagreed with Toptan. "If he's given the authority, the Justice Minister will be accused of making political decisions. The president is above political parties, and his decisions will be more trustworthy," Erdogan said.

Opposition CHP group Chief Hakki Suha Okay said, "The CHP will not allow for the legitimization of insulting Turkishness." Opposition far right MHP is preparing to launch a campaign against article 301, and has printed five million leaflets and made two short films titled, "Wake Up Turkey, Now's the Time for Unity."

Today's cartoon in mainstream Sabah: "Article 301 Gains Importance: A man asks PM Erdogan, "Where are you going?" Erdogan replies, "The say freedom for our party passes through this way [301]."

Babacan Holds Press Conference with Miliband in London
All papers report visiting Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan participated in a joint press conference with the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband in London on Monday. Babacan warned, "A

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possible ban on the AKP would have a serious impact on Turkey's ties with the EU." Babacan said, "Turkey's international influence has increased." He also noted, "A new period has commenced in northern Iraq," adding, "Iraq's territorial integrity and political unity have vital importance for Turkey."

Babacan told the Islamist-oriented Zaman, "The U.S. was concerned that the Turkish ground offensive in northern Iraq would endanger Iraq's internal balances. Also at that time, U.S. priorities there included the passage of the hydrocarbon and federation laws; in addition, two agreements were on the table to enable American troops to stay in Iraq without needing UN approval." On Kirkuk, Babacan said, "We believe there should be no referendum." Concerning Afghanistan, Babacan said, "Turkey has not yet responded to the NATO demand for sending additional troops. We think sending troops alone won't resolve the problem."

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Slain Artist's Remains Are Repatriated to Italy
All papers report the remains of an Italian artist who was raped and murdered in Turkey were sent to her hometown of Milan on Monday. Giuseppina Pasqualino di Marineo, also known as "Pippa Bacca," was found dead this past weekend in Gebze near Istanbul. In a call for peace, Pippa was hitchhiking to the Palestinian territories in a wedding dress. Pippa's sister Antoinetta told the press in Istanbul, "I would like to thank the Turkish nation their affection. I also want to thank Prime Minister Erdogan for his condolence messages regarding my sister's murder." Representatives from the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP), CHP, and the pro-Kurdish DTP, and some women's associations bade farewell to Pippa as her remains departed from Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul. Ufuk Uras, leader of the ODP, said, "Dear Pippa, you were killed by a man who spoke our language. Our sorrow will be eased a bit if we promise to work to eradicate violence inflicted against women in this country."

Editorial Commentary on the Global Food Crisis

Gungor Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan (4/15): "The recent developments around the world make one wonder if we are on the verge of a global famine. Famine is the most dishonorable disaster that human beings can face. Yesterday, the president of the World Bank urged for an immediate action plan; he emphasized that a plan devised during the upcoming G-8 summit would be too late. None of this should come as a surprise. This is not a terrible surprise from Mother Nature; this crisis is the result of human mismanagement of natural resources. In the end, the weak and illiterate poor will die of hunger. Those who are strong and rich will become even stronger by turning this crisis into an economic opportunity. This is the oldest imperialistic method in the book. Developed nations widen their hegemonic aims by using their production as a political weapon. Turkey has to wake up and reorganize itself based on the new realities. Turkey's rulers unfortunately have a fixation on breeding more instead of producing more. Let's hope that this famine alarm will result in a call for common sense."

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah (4/15): "The deepening

international gap between agricultural supply and demand is not a temporary issue. The world's population increases by 70 million every year. Because of this, agriculturally cultivated areas are increasingly replaced with expanding human settlements. Moreover during the last 20 years, liberal agricultural policies imposed by the U.S., the IMF and the World Bank caused the disappearance of farmers in low-income countries. The recent bio fuel hype has taken this crisis to a tragic level because corn is being used to create fuel instead. Instead, this corn could be used to feed millions of people. Those from Western Developed countries enjoy driving their 4x4 cars with bio-diesel but do not realize the impact this has on causing famine. The right to live is the fundamental human right. It is a crime against humanity to leave millions of people to die of hunger. This is an alarming signal. History tells us that tragedies like this lead to war."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Daily Cumhuriyet chief editor Ilhan Selcuk is in critical condition after heart bypass surgery on Monday.
- The AKP has prepared its defense in the case for the closure of the party. The defense is based on the objection that the suit was politically motivated.
- Cuma Ozdemir, one of the suspects involved in the murder of three Christian Bible publishers in Malatya, said the killings were

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instigated by suspect Emre Gunaydin. According to Ozdemir, Gunaydin said, "The Christians wanted to eliminate Islam in Turkey and were linked to the PKK."

International News

- Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias said the road for a solution on the divided island will not open unless Turkey changes its policy concerning military presence on Cyprus.
- The Independent reported Monday the U.S. and Iran have been conducting secret back-channel discussions on Tehran's nuclear program.
- The Beijing city government announced a plan to stop construction and heavy industry in an effort to improve air quality ahead of the Olympics.

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